CLAIMS

WE CLAIM:

1. A method of aerating yeast comprising the steps of:

    (a) suspending yeast in a ~~wort-free~~ aqueous solution comprising a fermentable sugar in an amount sufficient to give a gravity in the range of from about 2 to about 25 degrees Plato; and

    (b) aerating the suspension for a period of time and under conditions suitable to allow oxygen uptake by the yeast required for sterol and unsaturated fatty acid synthesis.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein zinc is added to the yeast suspension in a concentration effective to promote yeast performance in a fermentation medium.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the fermentable sugar of step (a) is selected from the group consisting of liquid adjunct, sucrose and fructose.

4. A method of enhancing yeast fermentation comprising the steps of:

    (a) suspending yeast in a wort-free aqueous solution comprising a fermentable sugar in an amount

sufficient to give a gravity in the range of from about 2 to about 25 degrees Plato;

(b) aerating (the) suspension for a period of time and under conditions suitable to allow oxygen uptake by the yeast required for sterol and unsaturated fatty acid synthesis;

(c) transferring the yeast of step (b) to a suitable volume of fermentation medium having a gravity comparable to the gravity of the solution of step (a); and

(d) allowing fermentation to occur under suitable fermentation conditions.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein zinc is added to (the) yeast suspension in a concentration effective to promote yeast performance in a fermentation medium.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the fermentable sugar of step (a) is selected from the group consisting of liquid adjunct, sucrose, and fructose.

The method of claim 4, wherein the fermentation medium of step (c) is selected from the group consisting of aerated wort and nonaerated wort.

8. A fermented beverage made by the method of claim 4.

9. The fermented beverage of claim 8, wherein the beverage is beer.

10. A fermented food made by using a yeast that has been treated by the method of claim 1.

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